



South Mountain Corridor Study
Citizens Advisory Team
DRAFT Meeting Summary

Date: April 28, 2005
Time: 5:30 p.m.
Location: GRIC District 6 Komatke Center, Learning Center Meeting Hall

Attendees

Rock Argabright, Ahwatukee Foothills Chamber of Commerce	Doris French, Laveen Village Planning Committee
Kris Black, Ahwatukee Foothills HOA	Michael Goodman, Phx Mtns Preservation Council
Ben Buchsieb, Lakewood HOA	Don Jones, Southwest Valley Chamber of Commerce
Jim Buster, City of Avondale	Wayne Nelson, GRIC District 7
Peggy Eastburn, Estrella Village Planning Committee	Laura Prendergast, Laveen Citizens for Responsible Development

Staff and Consultants Attending

Kevin Biesty, ADOT	John Godec, GRA
Michael Bruder, ADOT	Theresa Gunn, GCI
Matt Burdick, ADOT	Dan Lance, ADOT
Chris Clary-Lemon, HDR	John Roberts, GRIC DOT
Ray Dovalina, City of Phoenix	Sandra Shade, GRIC DOT
Amy Edwards, HDR	Steve Thomas, FHWA
Ralph Ellis, ADOT	Bill Vachon, FHWA

Citizens

Larry Landry	William Ramsay
Matthew Alan Lord	Dave Swisher
Douglas Murphy	Ken Witkowski

Meeting Summary: Theresa Gunn, GCI

Action Plan

Task/Activity	Who	When
Are adjustments planned for the ramp meters getting on I-10 freeway at Broadway?	ADOT	
Information on widening of I-10 in the Broadway curve	ADOT	
What can we do to make it easier to attend meetings?	SMCAT	
Check status/schedule for 91 st Avenue bridge reconstruction	HDR	

Welcome and Introductions

John Godec welcomed attendees to the meeting, introduced the committee members, and provided a brief background on the formation of the South Mountain Citizen's Advisory Team (CAT). John explained that comments from the public would be accepted in writing, and if possible, responses would be provided at the conclusion of the meeting.

John also asked the SMCAT members if they had any questions or comments. The following is a summary of the input received by the members.

CAT Member Questions/Comments:

- **Question:** Why is ADOT doing the public presentations and not the consultant team? Is the information being filtered by ADOT? How credible is the information and how is the public perceiving the change? **Response:** ADOT has received feedback that ADOT staff needed to be more visible instead of having the consultant team lead the process. The intent was not to influence the process or filter the information.
- **Comment:** I was offended by the article related to the closed meeting request that didn't include all of the facts.
- **Comment:** Foothills HOA Annual Meeting was held last night and an update on the South Mountain project was given. Residents expressed concerns about arterials around the mountain and impacts to South Mountain Park.
- **Comment:** People are still waiting to see what happens.

Project Status Update

The following presentations have been made during the last month:

- Ahwatukee Village Planning Committee
- Laveen Citizens for Responsible Development
- Chandler West Rotary
- Untied Dairymen of Arizona
- Foothills HOA

We are planning to have a series of public meetings at the end of summer or early fall. The team is discussing several design issues with ADOT and has had to make adjustments to right-of-way footprints which will require new technical studies. Because of these new issues, we will not be having additional SMCAT meetings at this time until the new information is available.

Follow Up from Last Meeting

Alternative Selection Process

Amy Edwards, HDR, clarified that the SMCAT members were being asked to identify a preferred alternative on the west side. The group will also receive the same amount of

technical information on the Pecos Road alternative. However; the draft EIS will only identify a preferred alternative for the west side until it is known whether or not there will be additional east side build alternatives.

Crime and Freeways

Sgt. Burke Roberts and Marivic Navida, City of Phoenix Police Department gave a presentation on crime increases as it relates to freeway location. Following are highlights from their presentation.

- There is no research on whether new highways increase crime.
- Crime changes are influenced by a wide variety of factors and it would be difficult to determine whether or not a new freeway had any impact.
- Sgt. Roberts stated that based on his 20 years experience with the department he has not seen any correlation between crime rates and freeways.
- Ms. Navida stated that the department does not have any statistics specific to crime adjacent to freeways. She stated the group could request the department conduct a research project that would look at the following factors:
 - Comparison of similar areas
 - Crime before and after the freeway
 - Change in proximity to the highway
 - Increase in population
 - New housing/commercial
 - Economic factors
 - Rural/urban
 - Population

CAT Member Questions/Comments:

- **Question:** How long would it take to do the study? **Response:** Not sure. It could take up to a year.
- **Comment:** My family has lived in the same area before and after construction of I-10 and we didn't see a crime change until the truck stops were built.
- **Public Question:** Do you have crime rates in hot spots for violent and property? **Response:** Ahwatukee is a very safe community, but they do have a lot of property crime mostly due to open garages. Criminals who use freeways to get away are the easiest to catch.
- **Comment:** Crime seems to be more related to what is built adjacent to the freeways.
- **Question:** What about freeways near schools? **Response:** Haven't seen any impact to the schools near the existing freeways.
- **Comment:** Our school playground backs up to I-10. I talked to the school staff and they didn't see any impact from the freeway but asthma went up after the truck stops were built.

Right of Way Footprint Changes for 101 Alternatives

Ben Spargo, HDR, reviewed the technical study right-of-way footprint changes that have been made to the alternatives to avoid direct impacts to the following Section 4(f) properties:

- W101 technical study right-of-way footprint was modified to avoid direct use of the following 4(f) properties
 - Tolleson High School Ball Fields
 - SW City Services Complex
 - City of Phoenix Park
 - Sachs Webster Farmhouse
- Tolleson High School Ball Fields
 - Reduced the technical study right-of-way requirement for the traffic interchange
- SW City Estrella Services Complex
 - Shifted alignment west to avoid new regional park at Lower Buckeye and 99th Avenue
- New City of Phoenix Park – Lower Buckeye between 91st and 83rd avenues
 - Alignment was shifted to the west to avoid the park.
- Sachs Webster Historical Property at 75th Avenue and Baseline
 - Alignment was shifted east to avoid the property

CAT Member Questions/Comments:

- **Comment:** There is a very old farmhouse at Dobbins and 59th Avenue and a movement to add the property to City of Phoenix historical list. **Response:** The team is aware of the Hudson Farm and is currently reviewing its status. A property only has to be eligible for historic designation, not necessarily on the historic registry, to be considered 4(f).
- **Question:** Any other 4(f) issues along Pecos Road? **Response:** Not that we are aware of at this time.

51st Avenue Traffic Interchange Alternatives

Chris Clary-Lemon, HDR, stated that based on input from the SMCAT members and legal requirements the project team has been looking at alternatives to reduce the impact of the proposed 51st Avenue service traffic interchange on South Mountain Park/Preserve. The first step is to try and avoid the park/preserve, which is not possible without potential GRIC alignments. The second step is to minimize the impact. He asked the group to help in identifying alternatives that would avoid direct impacts to the Alta Ridge. A tunnel is not an option for the Alta Ridge because of the configuration of the ridge relative to the proposed roadway.

SMCAT members were given maps and markers and asked to brainstorm optional service traffic interchange designs for 51st Avenue.

CAT Member Questions/Comments:

- **Question:** Can Phoenix grant any additional land from South Mountain Park/Preserve for the freeway without a city vote? **Response:** The team has discussed this issue with the City but there is no opinion at this time.

Other Issues

Amy Edwards reviewed the following issues.

Vertical Alignment

- ADOT has decided to study semi- and fully-depressed options for the alternatives.
- Because of the need to be above grade for the I-10 interchange, going over the railroad tracks and spurs, and to avoid impacts to the fiber optic lines, the team is considering only at-grade or above grade options for alternatives north of the Salt River.
- The project team will be looking at vertical alignment options for the alignments south of the Salt River.
- In the Laveen area, the team will consider semi- or fully-depressing the freeway.
- The team will also look at semi- or fully-depressed alternatives along Pecos Road, but there are drainage and utility concerns that may it difficult to build the freeway below grade.

Tunnel Alternatives

- ADOT has also decided to determine if a tunnel through South Mountain Park/Preserve would be feasible.
- The tunnel would exceed the 800' and require additional safety features, including ventilation shafts in the park/preserve.
- More information on the tunnel options will be provided as soon as it is available

Traffic Modeling and Data

Amy asked the group what information they wanted from the traffic modeling. Following are their responses.

- No Build Option-- what I-10 looks like from Queen Creek through Broadway Avenue
- What areas outside of the County are included in the modeling?
- What are the current traffic numbers?
- Update the traffic volumes map and identify the hot spots.

Respond to Written Comment/Questions

The following are verbatim comments/questions submitted on Comment Forms at the April meeting.

David Folts, Concerned Families along South Mountain Loop 202

- Why doesn't ADOT how (publish on South Mountain web page) all the public meetings that they host or attend month by month; i.e., HOA, Village Committee, etc.

thus allowing the public a chance to attend? **Response:** Any ADOT hosted meetings are posted on the website. The team is invited to other meetings to present information and/or answer questions, but attendance at these meetings is determined by the host organization and may not be appropriate for the general public to attend.

- Last week I heard a process described, I think it was part of the 4F process. I heard a statement that a visual check on the surface of the ground would be completed for Indian Artifacts which would include pottery, burial grounds, etc. With this area being so close to the Gila Nation. There is a better way to complete this. There is a multitude of tools/devices that can sense many different masses or objects many feet below the surface. **Response: We are consulting with the appropriate agencies regarding the best method to survey for and address any findings.**
- Will any test wells, i.e. ground contamination be affected by the construction of South Mountain Loop 202? If so, what process is used to insure that future data can still be tracked? **Response:** We will have to follow-up with that information.
- If ADOT didn't use any acreage from Alta Ridge of South Mountain Park, how many acres would still be needed on the southwest region of South Mountain Park to construct the South Mountain Loop 202? **Response:** That is still under study and is dynamic. We are looking at tunnels.
- Will the cost per mile of South Mountain Loop 202 rule out a semi or fully depressed highway? **Response:** That is not a primary decision point.
- Would the cost of tunneling through South Mountain Park overrule this type of construction on South Mountain Loop 202? Who would make the decision that this tunneling project would be too expensive? **Response:** "Extraordinary" costs will be discussed with the Federal Highway Administration.
- If the decision is made not to build South Mountain Loop 202, what other plans are in place to improve existing highway traffic specifically the Broadway curve on I-10? **Response:** A study is underway from SR51 to Santan freeway. Current alternatives are to build a CD roadway (parallel freeway system). The alternative assumes that the South Mountain freeway is built.
- Does the Police Department have any data that show the incidence of crime (density) along existing highways? If they do can they please let our organization know how to get this information. **Response:** Ms. Navida provided her contact information.

Larry Landry, Phoenix Resident

- Isn't it true that at the end of the process ADOT will present a draft EIS and FHWA will accept or not? Don't all the consultants work for ADOT? When will a North/South freeway alignment be recommended by ADOT?

Next Meeting

- Thursday, May 26, 2005